

VZCZCXYZ0003  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSN #1853/01 2571609  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 141609Z SEP 07  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7819  
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 001853

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR G, DRL/SEA  
NSC FOR NSC/DEMOC

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ES](#)  
SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR: INPUT FOR PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS  
ROUNDTABLE

REF: STATE 125456

[11](#). (U) Per Reftel request, Embassy San Salvador is pleased to provide information on Post's efforts to advance human rights in El Salvador. We trust the following information will advance Department's efforts related to the Democracy and Human Rights Roundtable at the UN General Assembly.

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Coordination with Human Rights Ombudsman  
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[12](#). (U) Coordination with key human rights stakeholders is at the forefront of Mission human rights advocacy. The Embassy maintains strong relations with the office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights (PDDH by its Spanish acronym). The PDDH was created as part of the 1992 Peace Accords that brought an end to the Salvadoran civil war. The PDDH is an autonomous government agency that facilitates human rights dialogue in Salvadoran politics and promotes public education on human rights issues.

[13](#). (U) In a recent meeting with Oscar Luna, the Human Rights Ombudsman, Ambassador Glazer discussed his "take back the streets" message and shared his vision of how the Embassy's anti-crime and anti-gang initiatives focus on one of the most basic of human rights -- freedom from physical violence. The Ambassador proposed -- and Luna gratefully accepted -- increasing the level of technical support that the Embassy provides to the PDDH to help it develop training and outreach programs in support of their human rights agenda.

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International Visits  
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[14](#). (U) The Public Affairs section sent two Salvadorans to the U.S. to participate in human rights programs. One attended a program by the Institute of the Americas focusing on public policy and immigration, with a strong human rights component. The other is participating in the International Visitor Leadership Program focusing on combating trafficking in persons

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Supporting Victims of Trafficking in Persons  
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[15](#). (U) El Salvador is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Victims are trafficked internally, from the rural and eastern parts of the country to the major urban

areas, and coerced into prostitution. The majority of foreign victims are women and children from Nicaragua and Honduras, also brought to El Salvador for the sex trade.

¶16. (U) El Salvador is part of the USAID/G-CAP Regional Anti-Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Program. This program supports the development of networks to prevent TIP; protect and reintegrate victims; develop and implement policies; and increase awareness of vulnerable groups and the population in general.

¶17. (U) Human rights protection activities include providing assistance to selected shelters where rescued victims are received. These shelters are staffed with doctors and psychologists, and provide other victim services. This program also works to improve the quality of remedial services and overcome attitudes that stigmatize trafficked people as prostitutes or sexual workers, rather than treating them as victims.

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Judicial Reform  
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¶18. (U) The Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Justice support the GOES in improving judicial transparency. This, in turn, strengthens due process and the rule of law, and protects human rights. One example of such work is support for the GOES as it seeks to adopt a new criminal procedure code. The current lack of unambiguous criminal procedures, which are aggravated by high levels of crime and violence, lead to procedural errors and weaken procedural protections for human rights.

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GOES Priorities  
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¶19. (SBU) The GOES is engaged in a delicate balancing act as it works to protect human and civil rights while combating stratospheric domestic crime rates. Addressing the crime problem, while at the same time respecting human rights, is at the top of the GOES priority list. The Saca administration is well aware that government and police actions are closely scrutinized both by the FMLN opposition and human rights NGOs. As a result, the government has addressed swiftly any allegations of excesses by the police and has taken a serious interest in maintaining public trust in the National Civilian Police.

¶10. (SBU) The GOES also approaches migration issues through the prism of human rights. The GOES is a strong advocate of Salvadoran migrants' rights. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has a dedicated Vice-Minister for Salvadorans Abroad who focuses primarily on the rights of the almost two million Salvadorans living in the U.S. -- including those doing so illegally. While it acknowledges the illegal status of many of its nationals in the U.S., the GOES nonetheless zealously works to protect and where possible expand the procedural rights of Salvadorans in the U.S., particularly those who are living under Temporary Protected Status (TPS).  
Butler